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C O N F I D E N T I A L DHAKA 002083

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [BG](#) [BG](#)

SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER CHALLENGES TERRORISM REPORT

REF: CALCUTTA 0176

Classified By: P/E Counselor D.C. McCullough, reason para 1.4 d.

1. (SBU) On May 2, Foreign Minister Morshed Khan blamed "organized vested interests" (read India and the Awami League) for creating the view that international terrorism exists in Bangladesh. Reacting to the Department's 2004 Country Reports on Terrorism, Khan told journalists that he sees no sign of activities by the group, the Harakat ul-Jihad-I-Islami Bangladesh (HUJI-B), cited in the report. He attributed the HUJI-B reference to unconfirmed speculation, and said concerns about what might happen in Bangladesh apply to any country in the world.

2. (SBU) There has never been an international terrorist attack in Bangladesh, Khan added, and no Bangladeshi has ever been arrested as a member of an alleged terrorist organization. He also noted the BDG's February 23 banning of Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB) and Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) as proof of Bangladesh's commitment to the war on terrorism.

3. (C) COMMENT: Our Terrorism report will fan the fears of those Bangladeshis who think the USG and India are working together to pressure Bangladesh. The BDG insists Bangladesh is free of terrorism to avoid complicating the ruling BNP's alliance with two Islamist parties and Bangladesh's relations with India. Terrorism is not the only troublesome issue the BDG tries to ignore. BDG officials have publicly denied the existence here of cholera, arsenic-contaminated water, and, most recently (according to the Finance Minister), unemployment.
CHAMMAS